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MAY 3.

Mr. THOS. MEEHAN, Vice-President, in the chair.

Twenty-three persons present.

On Aphyllon as a root Parasite.—Mr. Thomas Meehan remarked that the life histories of many of our root parasites were still obscure,—in many cases we hardly knew whether they were annual or perennial; how long it took for them to perfect themselves, and in some cases it was even doubted whether they were parasites in the true sense of the word, or merely obtained a start by feeding on partially decomposed vegetable matter. In one of the earlier editions of *Flora Cestrica*, Dr. Wm. Darlington observes that he has often dug *Aphyllon uniflorum* without finding it attached to anything,—and, though he omits this remark in later editions, he observes that it is “*Perennial?*” The speaker remarked that he had dug this species very carefully when in bloom, and washed the earth gently away, finding them truly parasitic on the coarser fibres of Asters and Goldenrods. They very readily separate from their connection unless carefully handled, which may account for the failure to note their true parasitic nature.

A specimen sent by Mr. Morris, a florist of Des Moines Iowa, of an allied species *A. fasciculatum* Torr. and G., (*Phelipæa fasciculata* of some authors), gives the opportunity for acquiring certain knowledge in relation to these points. Mr. Morris raised numerous plants of the common bedding geranium (*Pelargonium zonale*). The cuttings were made in October and November last. They were potted in earth taken from a piece of newly cleared woodland in the vicinity. The plants appeared in many of the geranium pots in his greenhouse, and were in full flower in April. As the plants were only in this soil for about three months, the seeds must have sprouted, flowered, and were on the decline in that time. They are therefore annual, and a very short-lived annual at that.

In regard to the parasitism, the attachment in several that Mr. Meehan had examined, was to the coarser roots. In the plant exhibited, it was to the main stem of the cuttings beneath the ground, and not to the roots, which in this specimen were merely weak fibres.

The geranium, an African plant, and of a very different character from these which the *Aphyllon* has been in the habit of feeding on, proving so acceptable to it in this instance, shows that it is either not partial in its parasitic tastes, or that it has ready powers of adaptation when something suited to its peculiar habits comes along.

MAY 10.

The President, Dr. JOSEPH LEIDY, in the chair.

Twenty persons present.

The following was presented for publication :—

“Contributions towards a Synopsis of the American forms of Fresh-Water Sponges with Descriptions of those named by other authors and from all parts of the world.” By Edw. Potts.

The death of Robert H. Hare, a member, was announced.

On the Stipules of Magnolia Frazeri.—Mr. Thomas Meehan exhibited some fresh flowers of *Magnolia Frazeri*, Walter—(*M. auriculata*, Lamarek), and said that when he contributed the paper on the “Stipules of *Magnolia* and *Liriodendron*” to the Proceedings of the Academy in 1870, he had not had the opportunity to examine fresh flowers of this species. It was not common in cultivation from the fact that the plants grown rarely produced seeds, and there had been little opportunities to get seeds from its North Carolina home. On his grounds of late years a specimen had annually borne flowers, which appeared very early, following immediately the flowers of the Yulan, and were as large and sweet as that species of China.

A point made in the paper referred to was that the petals of *Magnolia* were not modified leaves, as the petals of flowers would be broadly stated to be in morphological works but rather modified stipules, in which case the petiole and leaf blade have wholly aborted. At the time of its appearance, Dr. Asa Gray, to whose kindly criticisms on this and other papers he had been so often deeply indebted, wrote expressing his interest in the paper, saying that the observations confirmed the views of some German observer, whose name he could not recall, that the petals of many flowers were but modified stipules.

Mr. Meehan had not been able to meet with the name of the author or of the paper referred to by Dr. Gray, or the tenor of the author's views. Indeed his observations and those of the author referred to, must have been wholly overlooked by their co-laborers, or else the views have not commended themselves to their good judgment. For his own part the subsequent observations of nearly twenty years had convinced him that the petals of most flowers should be considered enlarged stipules or thinly dilated bases of petioles, rather than modified leaves, as we should understand this term. In many species of Roses, especially in *Rosa Kamtchatica*, and *Rosa cinnamomea* the stipules could be noted increasing, and the size of the leaf blade diminishing on the branch as it approached inflorescence. Often the tips of the sepals would develop to minute leaf blades, and in a few instances he had had seen the same appendages on abnormal petals. Often the stipules, especially in *Rosa Kamtchatica*, would have the red colors of the petals, when at the nodes immediately below the axis from which the peduncle proceeded. There could be no possible doubt in the minds of those who would carefully compare, and watch for occasional aberrations, that the petals of the rose were rather transformed stipules than complete leaves. Precisely the same process of development from stipules to